

Aragon sought help from John King of Castille, Duke of Lancaster, for the Franciscan Lluís de Fons (Ludovicus de Fontibus) sent by the General Chapter to Cambridge, so that the Chancellor and Masters should accept him '*ad oppositionem et responsiones lecturamque sententiarum et biblie . . . ut sic, Deo propicio, gradum magisterii obtinere citius valeat in theologica facultate*. (In J. R. H. Moorman *The Grey Friars in Cambridge 1225-1538* pp. 102, 177, with references leading to A. Rubio y Lluç *Documents per l'història de la cultura catalana mig-èval*, Barcelona 1908, 1921, II, p. lxxxvii.)

The book shows some of the most familiar characteristics of the writings of Professor Knowles: instances of his finely articulate estimations of human character and spirit, and of the sometimes magnificent power to trace trends, emphasis and distinguishing characteristics. Yet, apart from his Epilogue, it is difficult to get a whole impression of the writers who are discussed. Detailed analysis, quotations, illustrations from St John of the Cross (all necessary as evidence, and most valuable in themselves) are so much to the fore that the reader is often enlightened in a refracted way, by separate points and sections alone, rather than by being led through these to a share in the author's general view of his subject. Even so, it is sometimes especially in the smaller sections of discussion that a reader benefits from rare instances of the author's more personal comment, for instance in the discussion of Fr Baker's teaching on divine inspiration (pp. 179-80), or when Professor Knowles wonders whether Fr Baker 'has not fallen into a Charybdis of his own, by making prayer as an exercise, a pursuit, an effort, almost a life, into something with a mechanical efficacy of its own, the one clue and talisman. When all is said, the sole true end of the soul's life is to be united in will with God through love of him and one's neighbour—prayer it is, no doubt, in the deepest and simplest sense, but not prayer as an effort or activity distinguished from other virtues or activities of the Christian life' (p. 185).

JOY RUSSELL-SMITH

FERNAND PORTAL (1855-1926), *Apostle of Unity*, by H. Hemmer; translated and edited by A. T. Macmillan; Macmillan; 25s.

To an older generation, in its childhood when the question of the validity of Anglican Orders was being raised, and still young at the time of the Malines Conversations, the Abbé Portal was a fascinating and controversial figure. By the young today he is almost unknown and his significance unrecognized. This memoir was written originally in French by a group of Portal's friends, chief of whom was Canon Hemmer, one of the theologians who joined the Malines Conversations in their later and augmented stage. The present work is a translation and adaptation with explanatory notes for an English public. Contemporary ecumenists will find it of deep interest, for it presents a vivid picture of the outlook and character of the pioneers on both sides working for corporate re-

union between Rome and Canterbury in those early days, and of the atmosphere favourable and unfavourable in which their work was done.

By implication too it throws into contrast the immense change brought about by the ecumenical movement in pushing corporate reunion, especially in the form envisaged by the pioneers, away below the far horizon of possibility. Its place has been taken by the vision of a slow and all embracing process of evolution, a process inclusive of almost the whole of Christendom. It is conceived not so much in terms of negotiation as in those of a gradual movement towards organic unity in the Body of Christ. Within this movement the Holy Spirit is continuously preserving, strengthening, and incorporating all that is true, all that is of God's ordinance, all that is consonant with Christian devotion in the numerous portions of divided Christendom and drawing these elements into a single unity.

This view can be shared by Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants and Orthodox alike. It corresponds to the formula of prayer for unity, as and when Christ wills it, of which the Abbé Paul Couturier was the originator. It involves no compromise with conviction for anyone and is entirely compatible with the dynamic of the Church's life, which from the beginning incorporated into the presentation and practice of its unchanging faith elements of custom and thought that had originated in a very different milieu.

Fernand Portal, Lazarist priest, was a remarkable man, alive, original, shrewd and loving. In a real sense he was the originator of what is now known as the ecumenical approach of divided Christians to each other. A chance meeting in 1889 in Madeira with Lord Halifax, the lay leader, for more than half a century, of Anglo-Catholicism, began a life-long friendship devoted to the corporate reunion of the Church of England with the Catholic Church. Both men were enthusiastic, optimistic and utterly devoted to this cause. It is, I think, true to say that from the first Portal was imbued with Halifax's convictions about the Church of England and that these convictions, so enthusiastically held, represented half the truth only. The other half, the recognition of the fundamental and necessary cleavage between Canterbury and Rome as to the nature of the Church's authority, though acknowledged notionally by both was never really apprehended, or became a recognized factor in the work they set out to do. It is also true that both men greatly influenced Cardinal Mercier at the time of the Malines Conversations.

The result of this was that in the Anglican Orders controversy and later at Malines the situation was gravely misjudged by them and by some of their like-minded friends. Portal believed that Anglican Orders were doubtful and hoped that the Holy See would institute the practice of conditional re-ordination. In the event, at least from his point of view and that of Lord Halifax, it would have been better to have left the question undecided. But the illusory vision of corporate reunion not very far round the corner, a vision shared by Lord Halifax and a few others, hid from them the true situation.

It was not hidden from Archbishop Benson in 1890 or from Archbishop

Randall Davidson or Bishop Gore in the nineteen twenties. Reading again the letters and extracts from Portal's diaries on his first visit to England in 1894 one is struck by the extreme naivety with which the two friends regarded so favourably their polite reception by Archbishop Maclagan of York and Bishop Creighton of Peterborough. They were surprised and hurt on the other hand by the cold courtesy and caution of Archbishop Benson. There is a passage in the interview with Bishop Creighton which surely can only be understood as a reading into the Bishop's few and cautious words about infallibility what they wished to think he said, but which he certainly did not mean.

The same optimistic misjudgment may be observed in the assessment of the discussions at Malines. The very moderate concessions of the Anglicans in terms of a regard for the Pope as having a primacy of leadership or responsibility over the whole Church were seen by the two friends as being a considerable approach towards the achievement of their ideals; when in fact even that was an idea that would not have been tolerated in practice by any but very definite Anglo-Catholics, and they, as Bishop Gore is quoted as saying, though ready enough to accept Roman doctrine 'dislike or fear Roman authority'. Had the participants taken part in the Conversations with the same subjects of discussion, but in a modern ecumenical atmosphere, with the modern ideal before them, their dialogue would have been, and would be now, both remarkable and fruitful. As it was the whole atmosphere, though most courteous and friendly was bedevilled by the feeling always at least unconsciously present, that it was a round table negotiation of terms of corporate reunion at which they were assisting, a position which most of them on either side must have regarded as entirely unreal. They were always therefore over-cautious and unwilling to commit themselves; an attitude unfavourable to ecumenical exchanges.

It was the Abbé Portal and Lord Halifax who generated this feeling in the meetings since they themselves more than half believed in the possibility of corporate reunion being achieved in the not too distant future. In some measure they communicated this half-belief to Cardinal Mercier. Can anything else explain the unexpected reading by the Cardinal at the Fourth Conversation of Dom Beaudouin's paper, *The Anglican Church united not absorbed*. In this paper the conditions were laid down under which the Church of England could become a uniat Church preserving its autonomy as a Patriarchate under the Archbishop of Canterbury.

But though the approaches in 1895 and again at Malines in the nineteen twenties were abortive and resulted in something like a set back, through misjudgment of the situation, the spirit of Malines and its technique of approach were an example, the power of which has remained. It is now bearing fruit in the modern growth of Catholic ecumenism to which Pope John XXIII is giving such encouragement and impetus. The life-long eager devotion of Fernand Portal and of his friend in this cause commands our gratitude and will amply repay our study.

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